

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposition 50, Chapter 8

Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program

Implementation Step 2 Proposals

PIN: 9595
Applicant Name: County of Humboldt
Project Title: North Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Plan Implementation Proposal Step 2

Funds Requested: \$ 25,000,000
Total Project Cost: \$ 100,000,000

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| Total Proposal Score: 134 |
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Description: This proposal implements priority projects identified by the North Coast Regional Water Management Group as having important local benefit, meeting statewide priorities and addressing regional needs. Projects are located in six watershed management areas within the region. Projects improve water supply, water quality, and watershed values.

Question: *Adopted IRWMP and Proof of Formal Adoption*

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Attachment 3 includes adoption resolutions from seven counties (Humboldt, Modoc, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Mendocino, Trinity, and Del Norte). The remaining two resolutions are from the Sonoma County Water Agency and Mendocino County Water Agency. The score is raised from Step 1 to give credit for plan adoption and documentation.

Question: *Description of Region*

5

The IRWMP includes maps and a narrative description of the region. Maps include internal boundaries, major water related infrastructure, and land use divisions of the region. The IRWMP discusses water quality and quantity and current and future water needs. The IRWMP includes sufficient information to determine why the region is appropriate for water management. The ecological processes and environmental resources, including sensitive habitats, are included as well as a discussion of the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of the region.

Question: *Objectives*

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The IRWMP identifies the regional objectives and provides a description of how they were determined. The objectives are well defined and appear very appropriate for the region. The objectives appear to be interrelated and appropriate for the region. The IRWMP discusses the structure of the policy review panel and the TACs that determined the objectives.

Question: *Water Management Strategies and Integration*

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The IRWMP describes the water management strategies that were considered to meet the objectives. The IRWMP describes how the applicable strategies will work together to provide reliable water supply, protect or improve water quality, and achieve the other objectives. The IRWMP describes the added benefits of integration of multiple water management strategies. The IRWMP states that conjunctive use, desalination, imported water, and water transfer strategies are not applicable to this region.

Question: *Priorities and Schedule*

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Short-term priorities are reflected by the projects currently being proposed. Long-term priorities are: implementing the remainder of the projects on the IRWMP list of 123 projects, refining the IRWMP, and continued networking and outreach. An evaluation and update of the IRWMP and projects is proposed. There is a framework for education, negotiation, decision making, and adaptive management.

Question: *Implementation*

4

The IRWMP includes projects that are mostly based on feasibility studies and/or past monitoring efforts that will implement the IRWMP. The IRWMP includes a time line for short-term projects. The projects' status is indirectly addressed in the IRWMP schedule and could be more directly discussed. A discussion regarding project linkages could not be identified in the IRWMP, but the applicant states that physical connectivity of projects is not needed to achieve the objectives of the IRWMP. The institutional structure for ensuring IRWMP implementation is discussed and will be overseen by a Policy Review Panel and Technical Peer Review Committee.

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Question: Impacts and Regional Benefits

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The IRWMP describes several negative impacts if the projects are not implemented. The IRWMP states several reasons why there is an advantage of regional planning, and that unintended negative environmental impacts can occur, but is not probable because all projects will comply with CEQA. Potential development, if not well managed, could have negative impacts. The IRWMP identifies two interregional benefits and states that no interregional impacts will occur. The IRWMP thoroughly describes benefits and impacts to DACs. In addition, the IRWMP evaluates the impacts and benefits to air quality, energy provision capabilities, and wildlife.

Question: Technical Analysis and Plan Performance

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The IRWMP states that the selection of water management strategies is based on data from stakeholders, counties, and agencies in the form of local plans, watershed assessments, strategic plans, and other plans and data to reflect current conditions, needs, and conflicts. All strategies listed in the Guidelines were considered. Data gaps are noted. However, this information is not specific and states that most watersheds, rivers, and streams have not been adequately assessed. Methods to evaluate IRWMP performance are described with numerous performance measures listed. Also, project evaluation and monitoring is included in the individual project descriptions.

Question: Data Management

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Monitoring for each project can be found in Section 7 of the IRWMP. A discussion of the state of other existing monitoring efforts is found in Section 9 of the IRWMP. The applicant states that data will be collected as required by regulatory requirements and guidelines. The IRWMP describes the development and use of a GIS database. Data will be disseminated via a website to all web users and to state agencies. Hardcopies will be provided to interested parties without web access.

Question: Financing

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The applicant identifies beneficiaries for each project in the IRWMP. Appendix M of the IRWMP identifies potential funding/financing for each project. However, no discussion of ongoing support and financing for O&M of implemented projects is provided in the IRWMP.

Question: Relation to Local Planning & Sustainability

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The applicant includes federal, State, and local planning and environmental recovery documents. However, a discussion regarding how those documents relate to the IRWMP, other than a brief narrative stating that the IRWMP will synchronize local and statewide planning efforts, could not be found. While the IRWMP suggests coordination with local planners, it could have taken a more direct approach describing the nexus between local planning and the IRWMP. A discussion regarding local planning and IRWMP strategies could not be found.

Question: Stakeholder Involvement & Coordination

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The IRWMP describes the process used for inclusion of stakeholders in development of the IRWMP and identifies general stakeholder types. The IRWMP does not document public outreach specific to individual stakeholder groups. The IRWMP describes five processes that will be used to facilitate stakeholder involvement and communication during IRWMP implementation. The IRWMP states that over 70 agencies signed an MOU. EJ concerns are only identified at a conceptual level. The applicant should list or give a brief description of some of the conceptual ideas. The IRWMP states that representatives from DACs are primary leaders designated by the Regional Water Management Group. The applicant states that State and federal agencies are expected to be involved in strategies, actions, and projects, although no discussion is provided in the IRWMP.

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| Weighted IRWMP Total Score: 27 |
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Question: Work Plan

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The applicant revisits the six objectives of the IRWMP and discusses three themes or goals of the Proposal: salmonid recovery, beneficial uses of water, and intraregional cooperation. The applicant reiterates how the IRWMP and the proposal meet the intent of the IRWM grant program. Table 1 summarizes 25 projects and their status. The applicant discusses the synergies and linkages between projects, but concedes a lack of physical linkages. Table 2 summarizes project readiness. The applicant provides well-prepared work plans for the projects covering six watershed management areas. The detailed descriptions demonstrate that the projects are implementable and the work items address deliverables. Work items agree with corresponding budgets and schedules and are supported by plans and specifications. The work plans identify appropriate submittals, permits, and CEQA documents.

Question: Budget

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The applicant provides a summary proposal budget and 25 detailed project budgets. The project budgets agree with the work plan and schedules. Project costs are reasonable and supported by adequate documentation, including engineering cost estimates where relevant. There appear to be minor typographical errors in the hourly rates for staffing, project #236-S5 may have slightly underestimated stream flow monitoring costs, and a few of the contingency costs seem high.

Question: Funding Match

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The funding match is 65% of the total proposed costs.

Question: Schedule

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The applicant provides 25 project schedules in Gantt chart format. The schedules appear consistent and reasonable. Some projects will begin construction or implementation before December 1, 2007. However, most construction or implementation start dates are after December 1, 2007. Feasibility studies and 10% designs are done on all projects. Activities for post-monitoring and evaluation of projects are identified in the schedule.

Question: Scientific and Technical Merit

15

The applicant groups each project into one of six Watershed Management Areas covered in the region. All projects are supported by data and feasibility studies in Attachment 8. The list of studies is extensive and references are provided, such as designs and specifications, environmental documentation, maps, research papers, assessments, surveys, inventories, task force reports and documents, watershed plans, and procedure manuals. The applicant discusses current data gaps and plans for addressing them are contained in the work plan.

Question: Monitoring, Assessment and Performance Measures

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The applicant provides a PAEP table of performance measures for each project and demonstrates a solid basis for measuring the effectiveness each project. The tables contain project goals, desired outcomes, output indicators, outcome indicators, measurement tools, methods, and targets. Most of the targets are planned for attainment by 2007-2012, but some had targets of 2017 and 2025. The goals beyond 2012 may be considered unattainable within the life of the proposal. The PAEP does not provide specific targets in terms of amounts and timeframes for a few of the projects.

Question: Economic Analysis

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Overall assessment of benefits relative to costs is high-average and the water quality benefits are assessed as high. The application contains a good summary of costs and benefits by project. The total PV of costs is \$139 million. The PV of quantified benefits is \$151 million. A majority of the quantified benefits are from 5-7 projects. Some avoided project benefits and associated costs are insufficiently described. All benefits from increased stream flow are counted as water supply benefits. There are very large supply benefits estimated for restoring flow for critical salmonid habitat. It is possible that some benefits are double-counted. Thus, the exact amount of benefits may be questioned.

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Question: Other Expected Benefits

10

The applicant describes qualitative and quantitative Other Expected Benefits. Quantified benefits are claimed for wetlands, carbon sequestration and increased recreational opportunities based on documentation and research at hand. The total claimed for Other Expected Benefits is \$11.5 million and monetary benefits total \$151.5 million. It appears likely that the benefits claimed can be achieved by the proposal. Additional benefits include: avoided cost of noxious plant removal, ecosystem restoration and improved fisheries, reduction in fisheries closures, salmonid habitat restoration, stream flow adjudication, reduced flood damaged septic system repair or replacement, avoided electric costs, flood control, and watershed education and outreach.

Question: Program Preferences

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The applicant's suite of projects will implement five of the six Program Preferences: integration of projects for multiple benefits, water supply reliability, attainment and maintenance of water quality standards, habitat restoration, and projects serving DACs. Each Program Preference is represented by one or more projects with multiple benefits including sediment reduction, in-stream flows, riparian restoration and regional collaboration. The applicant demonstrates a high degree of certainty that the Program Preferences will be implemented because of the emphasis on scientifically and technically sound planning and implementation. The breadth and magnitude of the Program Preferences to be implemented is well documented.

Question: Statewide Priorities

30

The applicant claims that the proposal significantly contributes to six of the eight Statewide Priorities. The proposal addresses all of these priorities well. The remaining two Statewide Priorities are related to the Delta and do not apply directly to this region. The applicant provides an extensive table explaining how each project addresses Statewide Priorities. The individual projects and their relevance to the specific priorities are provided in separate tables. The applicant documents with a high degree of certainty that the Statewide Priorities claimed can be achieved. In addition, due to the size, location, and type of proposed projects within the region, the proposal addresses issues important to the State.

Total Proposal Score:

134